



# FarmVets

S O U T H W E S T



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## Newsletter December 2015

### Mastitis in the Dry Period

Winter housing for your dry cows is a critical control point for mastitis in your herd. The dry period plays a much larger role in mastitis control than in previously thought. The most common problems are associated with E. Coli and Strep Uberis. Both these bugs can survive and multiply outside the cow in bedding and faeces. It therefore follows that reducing exposure to contaminated bedding and faeces will help reduce mastitis arising from the dry period. Listed below are the targets set out by the DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan designed to reduce mastitis of dry period origin:

#### Cubicle housed dry cows

- At least as many cubicles as cows and cubicles of correct size (visit AHDB website)
- At least 90% lying correctly at all times: a reflection of the appropriateness of your cubicles
- Inorganic bedding (e.g. sand) is best
- Remove dung and wet bedding at least twice daily
- Apply clean bedding at least once daily
- Scrape at least twice daily



#### Straw yard housed dry cows

- Lying space equivalent to 1.5m<sup>2</sup> per 1000L annual yield (typically 12-15m<sup>2</sup> per cow)
- In addition to lying space enough feeding space (75cm x 2m), loafing space (3m<sup>2</sup>), and passing space behind feeding space (3m).
- Good drainage – slope with hardcore base
- Allocate 250kg straw per cow per month
- Use unchopped straw added daily and spread evenly throughout shed
- Scrape passageway twice daily
- Clean out shed fully at least once a month

#### Calving Pens

- Individual pen of 15m<sup>2</sup> for each cow
- Avoid pen sharing and cross suckling
- Fully Clean out each pen after every calving and use unchopped straw
- Remove calf within 24 hours of calving

If you would like to know more, please speak to one of our vets about the DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan.

## Anthrax in the UK

As some of you may be aware Public Health England have recently confirmed the first case of anthrax in the UK since 2006 in the Westbury area of Wiltshire. With this confirmation it is well worth keeping this disease in the back of your mind as a possible cause for any case of sudden death. This is particularly true in animals that are outside, weaned and otherwise healthy 2-3 hours before death. Anthrax is an acute disease caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Although it mainly infects herbivorous animals, humans can also contract the disease, contributing to its notifiable status.

All cases of sudden death should be discussed with your vet in order to determine whether or not the suspicion of anthrax can be reasonably ruled out. After death a dark bloody discharge may be seen from the nose, mouth and other openings. If there is any doubt we will request a licence for an APHA funded investigation by one of our Official Veterinarian qualified FVSW vets. Whilst on farm the vet will take the relevant samples and examine a smear under the microscope, looking for the rod shaped bacteria seen in the picture to the left. Of course there are other more common causes of sudden death in your cattle. Clostridial disease, hypomagnesaemia, fog fever, acute haemorrhage and possible poisons are just some of the things we will need to consider and discuss at the time.



## Controlling Fluke in Cattle at Housing

Disease from liver fluke costs the UK farming industry £300 million a year and has shown an increase in prevalence over the last few years partly due to changing climates. The disease is caused by the fluke migrating through the gut and liver, causing damage along the way. The results of this disease ranges from severe liver damage, anaemia, scouring, and sometimes deaths, to more subtle problems such as decreased milk yields and growth rates. Fluke need pasture, an intermediate host (a snail called *galba truncatolata*), and cattle or sheep, to complete their full life cycle. Winter housing breaks this cycle and is therefore the ideal time to consider treating your animals for fluke ready for the following grazing season.

Fluke take between 10-12 weeks to mature inside cattle. Don't forget this when purchasing worming products. Some wormers (e.g. Endospec) only kill the adult fluke leaving a number of immature fluke still inside the cattle which can lead to disease later on during housing. In these situations repeating fluke treatment at the end of winter housing is advised. Other wormers (e.g. Endofluka) kill a much larger range of fluke ages therefore don't require repeat treatment before turnout. As with all wormers consideration must be given to ease of administration (drench versus pour on), withdrawal periods suitable for your management system, and whether specific fluke treatment is required or a product that kills other worms as well. The decision is rarely simple so speak to one of our vets who will help choose the right wormer for you.

## CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OFFICE OPENING HOURS



**Christmas Eve: Close at 3 pm**  
**Christmas Day: Closed**  
**Boxing Day: Closed**  
**Bank Holiday Monday: Closed**  
**New Year's Day: Closed**



**Don't forget to order and collect medicines in good time**

*All at FarmVets SouthWest wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous 2016*